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Housing Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
March 10, 2022

Testimony in Support of SB 292 and SB 295

I urge the committee to JF these two bills which will lower the cost-of-living for already housing- and energy-cost-burdened New Haven residents as well as helping Connecticut achieve its climate goals. These statutory changes will also bolster the rapidly expanding green jobs sector.

S.B. No. 292 AN ACT CONCERNING HEATING EFFICIENCY IN NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR ALTERATIONS OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

This statutory change promotes energy efficiency and green jobs. In Connecticut we need to stop expanding our gas infrastructure and "electrify everything" in our built environment ("Environmentally Beneficial Electrification: The Dawn of 'Emissions Efficiency,'" Electricity Journal, Keith Dennis, Jim Lazar et al., July 2016; "The Key to Tackling Climate Change: Electrify Everything," David Roberts, Vox, Oct. 27, 2017 [<https://www.vox.com/2016/9/19/12938086/electrify-everything>]). Electrifying as much infrastructure as possible is essential to meet state climate targets identified in the Global Warming Solutions Act Public Act 08-98 of 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and high efficiency all-electric construction generates lower emissions even with our current gas-dependent electric grid, which will only get cleaner over time.

Fossil fuel combustion inside our homes creates harmful indoor air pollution. A recent study estimated that burning fossil fuels in buildings led to 318 additional deaths and \$3.567 billion in health impact costs in 2017 in Connecticut alone. One study showed that children living in homes with gas stovetops are 42 percent more likely to develop asthma than in homes without, and asthma rates in Connecticut are currently higher than the national average. (In my neighborhood in New Haven, asthma hospitalization rates are 10 times the national average, due primarily to poor indoor and outdoor air quality.) Newer construction codes require higher levels of air sealing and greater energy efficiency, which unfortunately and perversely means the pollution inside homes have a higher deleterious impact.

Electric heating using heat pumps is more than 3 times more energy-efficient than fossil fuel appliances because it moves heat instead of generating it. Heat pumps are a proven and effective technology, and have demonstrated success in even colder climates than ours. Maine

is well on its way to meet its goal to install 100,000 heat pumps by 2025. There are many precedents of demonstrated success for cost-effective all-electric residential construction including in the Northeast.

Energize CT already recognizes the benefits and offers an incentive for all-electric construction through its residential new construction program. This legislation builds on that program.

The addition of workforce training in this bill promotes green jobs. Clean energy jobs in Connecticut have increased more than 10% in the last 5 years, according to a recent CT Green Bank report. Under the more favorable policies of the Biden administration, these numbers will continue to grow exponentially.

Combining this statutory change with the adoption of the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code (anticipated to happen in 2025) will give the industry adequate time to prepare and adapt.

S.B. No. 295 AN ACT CONCERNING TAX CREDITS FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES.

Energy-efficient housing has many benefits, especially to communities like New Haven, including lower carbon emissions, reduced health impacts, reduced energy assistance, and the creation of high quality jobs. This tax credit will help to offset the minimally higher cost of construction related to better energy efficiency until there is parity in construction costs, at which time the credit should be removed. The HERS rating is a well-established and widely accepted rating system.